



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Fourth Sunday of Advent -- Year B December 18, 2005

On this last Sunday of Advent, in the Gospel for the Mass which we have just heard, the Church places before us Our Blessed Mother at the very moment when, as she says 'Yes' to the angel's message, she conceives the Son of God, at the very moment when the Word of God becomes incarnate.

All the expectations of the prophets, the desire of all the nations, that hope of all peoples which is called blessed, will now be fulfilled.

How sublimely beautiful, how purifying, how uplifting is this vision we are given of Our Lady at the moment of the Lord's Incarnation. As we are lifted up, as we are purified, as we reflect just a little more some little facet of the beauty of Our Lord and Our Lady, the Church wishes us to pray a very special prayer, the Opening Prayer for this Mass, and the prayer which is repeated by the Church three times every day, most of the days of the year, in Our Lady's Angelus. This is the prayer:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son
was made known by the message of an angel
may, by his Passion and Cross,
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Why does the Church have us pray this prayer specially on this Fourth Sunday of Advent? Because, as we stand on the threshold of Christmas, the Church wishes us for a moment to catch a glimpse of the vision of the whole course of Our Lord's life, from his Incarnation and Birth, through his Suffering and Death, to the glory of his Resurrection, and she wishes us to see that he saves us by making us one with himself, and conforming our whole life to the pattern of his, so that in our life too the mystery of his Incarnation, his Passion and Death, and his Resurrection is worked and revealed and made effective unto our salvation. So we pray thus:

"O Lord, we your people have learned of your Incarnation, of your taking a human nature from us, from Our Lady, the highest honor of our race, and uniting it to your divinity in your one divine Person, we have learned of this wonder through the message of the angel Gabriel to your Mother, and our Mother, Mary. Now, Lord, at Christmas, pour forth into our hearts your grace, that is, a share in your divine life; at Christmas, as you took from us a human nature and united it to your divinity, so give us a share in your divinity, and unite it to our humanity, to



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the humanity of all of us together, and to the humanity of each one of us individually, each one of us whom you know by name. Then Lord, having been made us one with you at Christmas, lead us through the mystery of your life: lead us through your birth and childhood; lead us through your adolescence; lead us through your adulthood; lead us through the years of your work of service to your Father and to your brothers and sisters; lead us to your Cross, unite all our sufferings to your suffering on the Cross, so that we may offer all our sufferings in union with your Cross to you and to your Father; lead us to your Death, that we may die with you, and so make our final and total gift of ourself to you; and then, O Lord Jesus, through that very death lead us to your Resurrection, make us to rise with you, that we may live with you in glory everlasting, that we may be merry with you, and all our brothers and sisters in you, forever.”

Dear friends, as we stand on the verge of Christmas, we stand on the verge of an immense mystery, immense in itself, immense in our sharing in it. May our faith and love be increased in these final days of Advent.

May we cry out in our hearts with the prophet:

Drop down, you heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth open
and bring forth the Savior.